

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
NORTHERN DIVISION

JESSE E. JONES,

Plaintiff,

FILE NO. 2:06-CV-279

v.

HON. ROBERT HOLMES BELL

UNKNOWN BAKER,

Defendant.

/

ORDER AND JUDGMENT ADOPTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This is a prisoner civil rights action filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The matter was referred to the Magistrate Judge for screening, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c). The Magistrate Judge issued a Report and Recommendation ("R&R") recommending that this Court dismiss the action for failure to state a claim (docket #3). The matter presently is before the Court on Plaintiff's objections to the R&R (docket #4).

This Court reviews *de novo* those portions of an R&R to which objections are made. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The Court may accept, reject or modify any or all of the Magistrate Judge's findings or recommendations. *Id.*

In his complaint, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant, an optometrist, misdiagnosed Plaintiff's medical condition and prescribed eyeglasses with the wrong correction. Plaintiff claims that, as a result of wearing the wrong corrective lenses, he has developed headaches,

blurry vision, dizziness and other vision problems. He contends that he submitted three requests for health care, but that, instead of seeing Plaintiff, Defendant merely re-evaluated the glasses and conducted a chart review. Plaintiff further alleges that, in his response to Plaintiff's first request for medical care, Defendant for the first time advised Plaintiff that he had an astigmatism and would take some time to adjust to his prescription. Plaintiff asserts that Defendant's failure to advise him of his astigmatism in the first instance constitutes misdiagnosis and that Defendant's entire course of treatment amounts to deliberate indifference to Plaintiff's serious medical needs, in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

As more fully discussed by the Magistrate Judge, the Eighth Amendment prohibits the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment against those convicted of crimes. U.S. CONST. AMEND. VIII. The Eighth Amendment obligates prison authorities to provide medical care to incarcerated individuals, as a failure to provide such care would be inconsistent with contemporary standards of decency. *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 102, 103-04 (1976). The Eighth Amendment is violated when a prison official is deliberately indifferent to the serious medical needs of a prisoner. *Id.* at 104-05; *Comstock v. McCrary*, 273 F.3d 693, 702 (6th Cir. 2001).

A claim for the deprivation of adequate medical care has an objective and a subjective component. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994). To satisfy the objective component, the plaintiff must allege that the medical need at issue is sufficiently serious. *Id.* In other words, the inmate must show that he is incarcerated under conditions posing a

substantial risk of serious harm. *Id.* The objective component of the adequate medical care test is satisfied "[w]here the seriousness of a prisoner's need[] for medical care is obvious even to a lay person." *Blackmore v. Kalamazoo County*, 390 F.3d 890, 899 (6th Cir. 2004). The subjective component requires an inmate to show that prison officials have "a sufficiently culpable state of mind in denying medical care." *Brown v. Bargery*, 207 F.3d 863, 867 (6th Cir. 2000) (citing *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 834).

Not every claim by a prisoner that he has received inadequate medical treatment states a violation of the Eighth Amendment. *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 105. As the Supreme Court explained:

[A]n inadvertent failure to provide adequate medical care cannot be said to constitute an unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain or to be repugnant to the conscience of mankind. Thus, a complaint that a physician has been negligent in diagnosing or treating a medical condition does not state a valid claim of medical mistreatment under the Eighth Amendment. Medical malpractice does not become a constitutional violation merely because the victim is a prisoner. In order to state a cognizable claim, a prisoner must allege acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.

Estelle, 429 U.S. at 105-06 (quotations omitted). Thus, differences in judgment between an inmate and prison medical personnel regarding the appropriate medical diagnoses or treatment are not enough to state a deliberate indifference claim. *Sanderfer v. Nichols*, 62 F.3d 151, 154-55 (6th Cir. 1995); *Ward v. Smith*, No. 95-6666, 1996 WL 627724, at *1 (6th Cir. Oct. 29, 1996). This is so even if the misdiagnosis results in an inadequate course of

treatment and considerable suffering. *Gabehart v. Chapleau*, No. 96-5050, 1997 WL 160322, at *2 (6th Cir. Apr. 4, 1997).

The Sixth Circuit distinguishes "between cases where the complaint alleges a complete denial of medical care and those cases where the claim is that a prisoner received inadequate medical treatment." *Westlake v. Lucas*, 537 F.2d 857, 860 n. 5 (6th Cir. 1976). Where, as here, "a prisoner has received some medical attention and the dispute is over the adequacy of the treatment, federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments and to constitutionalize claims which sound in state tort law." *Westlake*, 537 F.2d at 860 n.5; *see also, Brock v. Crall*, No. 00-5914, 2001 WL 468169, at *2 (6th Cir. Apr. 27, 2001); *Jones v. Martin*, No. 00-1522, 2001 WL 223859, at *1 (6th Cir. Feb. 28, 2001).

Plaintiff has alleged no more than that he believes his prescription is inaccurate because he continues to have vision problems. Although in his objections he attempts to suggest that Defendant acted intentionally to write the wrong prescription, he makes absolutely no factual allegations that would support such an inference. *See Miller v. Calhoun County*, 408 F.3d 803, 820 (6th Cir. 2005) (rejecting prisoner's allegation that defendant doctor had acted intentionally in the absence of facts that would support the inference). Instead, Plaintiff has alleged only a disagreement with the course of his treatment. Such allegations are insufficient to state an Eighth Amendment claim. *Westlake*, 537 F.2d at 860 n. 5.

Having considered each of Plaintiff's objections and finding no error, the Court hereby denies Plaintiff's objections and adopts the Report and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge as the opinion of the Court. Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that Plaintiff's objections (docket #4) to the Report and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge are **DENIED** and the Report and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge is **ADOPTED** in its entirety as the opinion of this Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff's complaint is dismissed for failure to state a claim, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Court finds no good-faith basis for appeal within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3).

Date: February 13, 2007

/s/ Robert Holmes Bell

ROBERT HOLMES BELL
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE